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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 8 October 2004, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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04-54218 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*) (A/59/23, A/59/134 and A/C.4/59/4)

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Agenda item 82: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/59/74)

1. **Mr. Okio** (Republic of the Congo) noted that the current situation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories offered little hope of ending colonialism during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Indeed, that goal seemed to be receding year after year. The Committee's role was therefore more and more important, and it must find ways of tackling the root causes of the problem. Specific measures to promote the economic and social development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and full cooperation by the administering Powers were vital, and that in turn required real and active partnership between those Powers and the Special Committee. The right to self-determination was a fundamental one and, in the case of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the notion of human rights must be understood holistically. The international community therefore had a duty to assist those Territories and to undertake to implement the principles and resolutions it had itself adopted.

2. With reference to the report of the Special Committee (A/59/23), it was useful to undertake regular reviews of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The case-by-case approach proposed for the implementation of the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had little chance of success since the populations concerned were not familiar with the guiding framework for action on their part, namely General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), or with the new developments that affected them, as the recent regional seminars had shown. It was therefore important to improve the dissemination of information to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to better equip United Nations bodies to strengthen their activity in that area. It was noteworthy that the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Development Programme were making serious efforts in that regard, and that some States granted scholarships to nationals of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Visiting missions should be undertaken more frequently as they enabled the United Nations to better ascertain the situation and give the Territories more effective assistance. They could also facilitate the elaboration of policies actually geared to local needs.

3. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, where the report of the Secretary-General (document A/59/134) had shown the obstacles involved, he stressed that his Government had excellent relations with all the countries of the Maghreb. He further reaffirmed its support for efforts being made under the auspices of the United Nations and encouraged the parties and neighbouring countries to pursue dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with a view to achieving a political settlement that took into account the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, the interests of the populations concerned, and the requirements for peace and cooperation in the region.

4. **Mr. Moleko** (Lesotho) recalled that, in spite of the considerable progress achieved by the United Nations in the area of decolonization, as the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism reached the half-way mark there were still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining. Without minimizing the cooperation of most of the

administering Powers, he lamented the slow pace of the decolonization process.

5. The delegation of Lesotho was particularly concerned that the people of Western Sahara were still denied the right of self-determination. It welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to find a mutually acceptable political solution to the problem, and fully supported all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions calling for decolonization of the Territory, particularly through the implementation of the Settlement Plan and the organization of a referendum. Only the holding of a referendum, without delay, could lead to a just and lasting solution to the conflict. It was regrettable that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly with respect to the Non-Self-Governing Territories had been ineffectual. He urged the Committee to give closer consideration to the concerns expressed each year by the representatives of those Territories and the petitioners on the issue of self-determination because colonialism must come to an end.

6. **Mr. Gregoire** (Dominica) said that his delegation agreed with the statement made by the representative of Saint Lucia, on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community, putting decolonization issues in a regional perspective.

7. Although 80 countries had achieved political independence within the framework of the decolonization process, there remained 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories, seven of which were situated in the Caribbean region. The United Nations and the Committee therefore still had a huge task ahead to change their political status.

8. Dominica attached great importance to the self-determination of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and believed that the process of decolonization should be accelerated and greater emphasis placed on implementation of various resolutions aimed at eradicating colonialism. The international community must demonstrate genuine commitment in that regard.

9. One of the challenges facing the Territories was the inadequacy of relevant information regarding political options. In most of the Territories, people continued to be unaware of the legitimate political options. If there was going to be constitutional and political advancement, a coordinated programme for the dissemination of unbiased information to the Territories on the various political status options would be essential.

10. In that context, he underscored the important role played by the regional seminars, such as the one held recently by the Special Committee of 24 in Madang, Papua New Guinea. Such seminars provided a framework for the frank exchange of views and valuable input from the people of the Territories and representatives of civil society. The next seminar was scheduled to be held in the Caribbean region.

11. He welcomed the work done by the Special Committee of 24, as described in document A/59/23. He fully supported that report and endorsed the proposal of the Chairman of the Special Committee to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, since such a review would speed up the decolonization process. He also endorsed the view that the Special Committee should develop a mechanism to systematically review, on an annual basis, the implementation of the specific recommendations on decolonization emanating from General Assembly resolutions and the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

12. Dominica reiterated its support for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and, in that regard, called for implementation of the Peace Plan which had been recently reaffirmed in the Security Council.

13. **Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas** (Bolivia) said that the current session provided an opportunity for the international community to redouble its efforts and to reaffirm commitments undertaken to achieve United Nations decolonization goals. The Bolivian delegation had studied the report of the Special Committee (A/59/23) and had taken due note of the decision of Member States to implement the Declaration and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the cooperation of the administering Powers, the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee, and the organization of weeks of solidarity, regional seminars and visiting missions.

14. Yet, despite all those initiatives, at the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism the process of decolonization still was not completed. He wondered what were the obstacles,

possible gaps or shortcomings and why, in spite of an abundance of information and the existence of action frameworks, the problem seemed insoluble. Thought should be given to how those obstacles could be surmounted, since all the parties concerned seemed to have the same goal. As food for such thought, he mentioned the remarkable work done by Tokelau and New Zealand, of which he had first-hand knowledge, and encouraged the Committee to seek inspiration from that example.

15. The thinking in the Committee should result in specific measures. In that regard, there were two priorities: raising the political awareness of the populations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories about the options proposed, and disseminating information. At the regional seminar held in Anguilla in 2003, it had been found that the inhabitants of the Territories were not aware of all the options available to them. Visiting missions and seminars were also quite useful to the work of the Special Committee and for relations between the Non-Self-Governing populations and the administering Powers. It was to be hoped that the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would mark the end of colonialism.

16. **Mr. Guterres** (Timor-Leste) recalled that his country had been on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories for more than 30 years and that he had personally had occasion to participate in the work of the Committee as a petitioner.

17. He paid a tribute to all countries, organizations and individuals that had shown solidarity with the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and had nurtured their inhabitants' hopes of freedom and justice, building strong human values such as tolerance, that had helped to prevent violence and terrorism. However, he regretted that there were still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories and he hoped that, as a result of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the international community would continue to provide the economic, social and political support needed by the peoples of the Territories.

18. The delegation of Timor-Leste welcomed the 2004 Pacific regional seminar in Madang (Papua New Guinea) and progress made by Tokelau and New Zealand. It also noted the efforts of the Caribbean Community in fostering the integration of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories into their institutions. Timor-Leste congratulated the 56 States that had offered scholarships to nationals of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and supported the draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations.

19. Because of the longstanding ties with the leaders of the Frente POLISARIO and the fact that the two peoples had been united by a common struggle, shared similarities in their history and suffering, the people of Timor-Leste had always followed closely the struggle of the Sahrawi people. Recalling that the principle of a referendum on self-determination had been accepted over 10 years earlier by Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, he said the delegation of Timor-Leste was disturbed by the slow pace of the process and the current difficulties described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/134). Nevertheless, the release of 100 prisoners of war by the Frente POLISARIO in February 2004 and the commitment by both parties to observe the ceasefire were encouraging.

20. As an independent State, Timor-Leste was seeking integration into the Association of South-East Asian Nations. In a world of interdependence and globalization, cultural similarities and a common language already united the peoples of the Maghreb region. It was the forward-looking vision of the Maghreb leaders that would unite their peoples and countries; colonial boundaries would disappear. The best means of achieving that was to grant the Sahrawi people the possibility of exercising their right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

21. **Mr. Martins** (Angola) said that since the birth of the United Nations more than 60 Non-Self-Governing Territories, representing 80 million persons, had been decolonized and had achieved independence. However, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories had not yet exercised their right to self-determination and there was concern as to whether the process of decolonization would be completed by 2010, as stipulated by the General Assembly Declaration on the Eradication of Colonialism.

22. In that connection, as regards the situation in Western Sahara, it was worrying that the ongoing negotiations between the parties did not seem to be

progressing. Angola continued to support a peaceful solution to that situation. The Settlement Plan and the Peace Plan drawn up by the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Baker, were a sound basis for the peaceful resolution of conflict in that Territory. The parties should also be encouraged to work together in order to achieve a peaceful resolution of the problem.

23. In the case of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, the role played by the regional seminars and the visiting missions of the Special Committee of 24 should be underscored. They were useful for gathering information on the political options offered to the peoples in question: namely, independence or free association, as defined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). His delegation hoped the administering Powers would cooperate fully with the Special Committee to facilitate such visiting missions. The Committee's proposals regarding the mid-term review of the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in an attempt to move the process forward should also be supported. Angola also endorsed the idea that the Special Committee should establish an annual review mechanism to monitor implementation of specific recommendations for implementing the Plan of Action for the Second Decade.

24. The international community, and particularly the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union, should make an effort to persuade the parties concerned to respect the provisions of the United Nations Charter and other relevant legal instruments, in order to accelerate the decolonization process.

25. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) said that, at the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the goals of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) were far from being achieved, because 16 territories were still non-self-governing and millions of people were still unable to enjoy their fundamental right to self-determination. Consequently, it was necessary to enhance cooperation between the Special Committee on Decolonization and the administering Powers, which had particular obligations under the terms of the United Nations Charter.

26. The mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) would expire at the end of the month. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the question of Western Sahara (A/59/134) assessed the work still to be done in order to ensure the well-being of the Saharan people and restore peace to that part of the Maghreb. While the role played by the United Nations and the African Union was important, that of the parties to the dispute was even more so, inasmuch as they were principally affected, and peace and stability in the subregion was dependent on their actions.

27. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan), while underscoring that decolonization was one of the areas where the United Nations had been most successful and which had transformed the map of the globe, said that 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories still awaited decolonization and that, at the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, much work remained.

28. Pakistan supported the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization as well as all the regional initiatives aimed at furthering the decolonization agenda, such as the Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization held recently in Papua New Guinea. Such seminars played an effective role in focusing discussions on matters concerning Non-Self-Governing Territories and also provided opportunities for the representatives of their peoples to present their views. Pakistan also commended the administering Powers that continued to show cooperation and flexibility in accelerating the decolonization process in certain Territories. The positive role played by New Zealand with regard to Tokelau was a case in point.

29. Nevertheless, the process was not limited to the issue of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The aim was to ensure that all peoples under colonial administration or foreign occupation were able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, a principle enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the essential prerequisite for friendly relations between States.

30. Even after independence, colonialism had left behind a bitter legacy of foreign occupation and violent confrontations in two regions of the world, Kashmir and Palestine, which for over half a century had been denied the exercise of their right to self-determination. Pakistan was firmly committed to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, one which was just and acceptable to India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people. The Secretary-General had taken note of the important

strides made by India and Pakistan to improve their relations and to resolve outstanding issues.

31. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that, with the support of the United Nations, historic progress had been made since the launching of the decolonization process. Nevertheless, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the list of the Special Committee on Decolonization and it was the duty of the United Nations and the international community to bring the process to a successful conclusion.

32. When proclaiming the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, United Nations Member States had indicated that they all desired an early conclusion of the process. Consequently, the Chinese delegation called for greater cooperation between the administering Powers and the United Nations in order to allow the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination as soon as possible.

33. China had consistently supported the peoples of those Territories in their struggle for recognition of that right and it would continue to play an active part in the work of the United Nations in that area.

34. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) said that, as an ally of peace-loving nations, Ecuador supported the peaceful settlement of conflicts, law and international solidarity, tolerance, and strict respect for human rights and the moral principles that should govern relations between individuals and States.

35. The foreign policy of Ecuador was based essentially on self-determination of peoples, peace, cooperation, legal equality among States, condemnation of the threat or use of force as a means to settle conflicts, rejection of all forms of colonialism, neo-colonialism, discrimination or segregation and recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination and efforts to combat oppression, including economic exploitation.

36. In accordance with those principles and its legal tradition, Ecuador had supported the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 1960, and had also voted in favour of a number of related resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

37. The delegation of Ecuador was therefore concerned that, despite all the efforts made by the international community since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), there were still 16 Territories that for various reasons had not yet attained autonomy and independence. The Government of Ecuador therefore supported any initiative to enable those Territories to fulfil their legitimate aspirations and urged Member States and specialized agencies to promote that natural evolution of the legal personality and sovereignty of peoples.

38. **Mr. Alfa Zerandouro** (Benin) said that the United Nations had made considerable progress in the decolonization process. To resolve the situation in the 16 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, it must encourage constructive dialogue between parties aimed at a lasting peaceful solution.

39. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, the persistence of the dispute for nearly three decades was liable to undermine the bases for harmonious economic and social development in the Maghreb subregion and constituted a real problem for all of Africa. Without a political solution acceptable to the parties, the suffering of the peoples concerned would only grow. Everything must therefore be done to pursue efforts under United Nations auspices to find a rapid solution. A realistic political settlement must take into account both the higher interests of the people of Western Sahara and the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Morocco.

40. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that the Sudan had been among the first African countries to support peoples seeking independence. Although a good many of them have succeeded in doing so, some Non-Self-Governing Territories continued to have their rights flouted and suffered from political, economic and environmental damage due to colonization.

41. The General Assembly had given the Committee a very clear mandate in 1961 and, during the previous session, had asked it to study every possible means of implementing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Little progress had been made in that area, however. Therefore, there was a need to redouble efforts to convince the administering Powers that they must abide by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, guarantee the progress of the peoples administered by them on all fronts and preserve their resources,

particularly natural resources, as such resources were indeed the property of the peoples of the Territories.

42. Concerning the question of Palestine and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the Government of the Sudan recalled the injustice suffered by the Palestinians struggling against an oppressive occupation force that was plundering their natural and economic resources while the Security Council and United Nations remained powerless. The credibility of the United Nations might therefore rightly be called into question when it affirmed that it was doing everything possible to help peoples to exercise their right to self-determination.

43. **Mr. Mutisi** (Zimbabwe) said that the question of decolonization remained an unfulfilled objective of the United Nations. While the Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was well under way, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories were still seeking their independence. Zimbabwe, which had experienced colonialism and still suffered from its consequences, understood the situation in those Territories and called for more concerted action to give them satisfaction. It also expressed its gratitude to the administering Powers that were making commendable progress in implementing the United Nations resolutions.

44. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, he associated himself with other delegations that urged all the parties to implement without further delay the Security Council resolutions supporting the peace plan. The people of Western Sahara, like all peoples experiencing the same lot, should be able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

45. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that, since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, significant progress had been made in the area of decolonization, mainly thanks to the efforts of the Special Committee of 24.

46. Guinea had been among the initiators of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and was an active member of the Special Committee; therefore, it followed with particular attention the development of the decolonization process. It would continue to contribute to the eradication of colonialism.

47. Concerning specific cases, his delegation welcomed the conclusions of the Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization and the significant progress made in the settlement of the question of Tokelau and called on the administering Powers of the other Territories to increase their cooperation with the Special Committee.

48. Regarding Western Sahara, Guinea was in favour of a political settlement of the conflict under international law. It encouraged the parties concerned to strengthen their cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in order to find, with the help of friendly countries, a negotiated, just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution of the conflict, guaranteeing peace, stability and interdependent development of the Arab Maghreb Union and thus of Africa as a whole. In that regard, the Guinean delegation welcomed the encouraging address recently delivered by the King of Morocco, in which he had solemnly reaffirmed his country's readiness to cooperate both with the United Nations and with the parties concerned, with a view to settling the conflict. It was to be hoped that the Committee's deliberations would give the ongoing peace process new impetus.

49. He took note of the recommendations of the Special Committee, including those relating to the formulation of a programme of work covering, in the specific case of each Non-Self-Governing Territory, the holding of regional seminars to collect and disseminate information on the Committee's deliberations and to facilitate the participation of the Territories' inhabitants in those seminars, and the strengthening of visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

50. **Mr. Benmouna** (Morocco) observed that the regional conflict over the Sahara involved two neighbouring countries, Morocco and Algeria, which had nonetheless forged bonds of fraternity over time. It was precisely that great human and cultural closeness that had led Morocco to mobilize its forces in support of the Algerian National Liberation Front. Sadly for the Maghreb, Algeria, carried away by its ideological enthusiasms of the time, had opted for conquest of regional hegemony instead of determinedly engaging in the work of building of a united and cohesive Maghreb. It was in that context that Algeria had chosen to impede the peace process on which Morocco had embarked in order to achieve its territorial integrity. The urge to play a predominant role in the region at any price had led Algeria to propose to Mr. Baker, in 2001 in Houston, Texas, the partition of the territory of the Sahara, which was surprising from a country that had long set itself up as a champion of self-determination. The partition proposal had evidently

been designed to defeat the framework agreement proposed by Mr. Baker in 2001 and recommended in Security Council resolution 1359 (2001) as a basis for negotiation. In return for his efforts to broker a negotiated and mutually acceptable settlement of the Sahara dispute, the Secretary-General had been accused by the representative of Algeria of displaying an unacceptable lack of seriousness.

51. Algeria claimed to be defending a principle of the United Nations, but the sad irony was that the so-called defence of that principle had plunged the entire Maghreb, for three decades, into paralysis and blocked all efforts to build the Maghreb Union and establish dialogue with the European Union. And yet, encouraged by many neighbouring countries, Morocco had spared no effort to improve its relations with Algeria, thus opening up an avenue for the revitalization of the Maghreb. The Moroccan delegation was convinced that the improvement of bilateral relations would eventually promote the settlement of all the disputes, including the dispute over the Sahara, which Algeria had set as a prerequisite for the development of bilateral relations.

52. However, there were encouraging elements. Peace had been maintained, thanks to the action of the United Nations, and a process had been seriously set in motion by the Security Council for seeking a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution of the conflict.

53. Invited to continue the task of political mediation with the parties and neighbouring States, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, who had succeeded Mr. Baker as Special Representative of the Secretary-General, had entered into consultations in the region in order to assess the situation and lay the groundwork for genuine negotiation between the parties concerned. King Mohammed VI had reiterated Morocco's position and its commitment to participate in negotiation under United Nations auspices in order to find a mutually acceptable political solution.

54. In seeking to ignore the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Algeria was assuming the weighty responsibility of blocking the process of the quest for a political solution, just as it had closed the door on the construction of the Maghreb. It was incredible that a country that claimed to be observing a political settlement process should have decided to boycott the Special Representative's efforts and impose its position on the international community.

55. The facts of the dispute were now clearly established and the positions duly recorded at the United Nations. It was thus of no avail to increase tension through useless pressures in the form of desperate, illegal acts such as recognition of a puppet authority, an act that discredited only those who committed it or subscribed to it. The time had come to put an end to that dangerous game, the only result of which thus far had been to divide the African continent and weaken it at a time when it needed to be absolutely united in order to address the challenges of globalization and underdevelopment. It was now time to regroup. Africa must, as Europe had done after the fall of the Berlin Wall, turn existing differences into factors of rapprochement and mutual enrichment, not into a source of wars and conflicts.

56. Morocco was ready to enter that debate with Algeria in order to prevent conflagration in the region and to build cooperation in which the Sahara would serve as a secure link between the north and south of the continent. Indeed, new threats and dangers lurked in the area, which had become a refuge for many terrorist and criminal tendencies.

57. It was to be hoped that Algeria would be able to abandon its former attitudes and accept the offer made to it to build a future of peace and prosperity for the Maghreb and contribute to the progress of the African continent and cooperation with the other regions of the world, in the interests of a more equitable and more rational globalization.

58. Morocco was ready to respond positively to the Secretary-General's appeal to the parties and to neighbouring States to collaborate with the United Nations in order to hasten the achievement of a political solution to the dispute over the Sahara. It would play an active role in the negotiation of a final political solution that was mutually acceptable to all parties concerned. For the time being, it would merely bear in mind the developments of 2003, in order to afford every opportunity for the promotion by the Secretary-General of future negotiations for peace in the Maghreb and renewed concord in the region.

59. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement by the representative of Morocco was tragicomic. That representative had unsuccessfully tried to convince the

Committee by stating that Morocco was cooperating with the United Nations to solve a problem created by Algeria and by insinuating that Morocco was the victim of a conspiracy. It was illegally occupying a territory that was on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Special Committee on Decolonization. No international organization or country had ever recognized its sovereignty over Western Sahara. It was difficult to see how Morocco could claim to be cooperating with the United Nations when it had accepted, then rejected, the Settlement Plan and the referendum on self-determination.

60. Moreover, Morocco maintained that Western Sahara belonged to it and that the Saharan people wished to be Moroccan. In fact, the Government feared the results of a referendum, even one open to the Moroccans resident in Western Sahara, who outnumbered the Saharan people two to one. The suffering of the Saharans in the refugee camps resulted from Morocco's invasion of their territory. That country was wrong to occupy a territory that did not belong to it and had lost all credibility by engaging in unscrupulous ploys to delay the referendum. If it was ready to settle the dispute over Western Sahara, it should accept the Peace Plan drawn up by the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, James A. Baker III, and supported by the Security Council in its resolution 1495 (2003).

61. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reiterated that Algeria was a party to the dispute, as evidenced by the fact that its Permanent Representative was present. The Algerian delegation was indulging in appalling generalizations and misrepresenting the documents on the issue. Morocco was not afraid of a referendum procedure; it had no need for recognition of its sovereignty over the Sahara, because it was acting within its rights, in the same way that Algeria had no need for anyone to recognize its sovereignty over Kabylia. The dispute had been artificially created by Algeria, which should fulfil its responsibilities and settle it peacefully.

62. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, since the Moroccan delegation was flustered, he did not wish to increase its confusion.

63. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the Algerian delegation had exhausted its arguments, whereas the Moroccan delegation had stated its position with the requisite calm.

64. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded the general debate on decolonization.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.